

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8536

INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL OPORTO

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: CAETANO SPEECH TO NATION ON EVE OF
ELECTORAL PERIOD

SUMMARY: PM LAMBASTS OPPOSITION FOR ALLEGEDLY USING
ELECTORAL PERIOD AS PRETEXT TO UNDERTAKE REVOLUTIONARY
ACTIVITIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH TERRORIST MOVEMENTS. END
SUMMARY

1. CAETANO DELIVERED SEPTEMBER 27 ANOTHER OF HIS PERIODIC
"FIRESIDE CHATS" TO NATION. THIS ONE CAME ON 5TH ANNIVERSARY
HIS TAKING POWER, ON EVE OPENING ONE MONTH PRE-ELECTORAL
CAMPAIGN PERIOD. SPEECH ESSENTIALLY LONG (40 MINUTES)
ELABORATION ON THEME THAT DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION NOT TAKING
ELECTIONS SERIOUSLY, BUT RATHER USING THEM TO UNDERMINE
PORTUGAL'S WILL TO PERSEVERE IN AFRICA.

2. CAETANO DECLARED PORTUGAL NOT MILITARILY LOSING
BATTLE IN THE OVERSEAS PROVINCES AGAINST TERRORIST
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MOVEMENTS, DESPITE CUBAN, SINO-SOVIET, AND

SCANDANAVIAN AID TO THESE GROUPS. FURTHERMORE, HE STRESSED, THERE ARE NO "LIBERATED" AREAS IN THE OVERSEAS PROVINCES--THIS IS A LIE SPREAD BY PORTUGAL'S ENEMIES.

3. THE PRIME MINISTER WENT ON TO STATE THAT THE TERRORISTS, REALIZING THEY CANNOT PREVAIL MILITARILY, HAVE DECIDED TO CONCENTRATE ON PSYCHOLOGICALLY UNDERMINING THE NATIONAL WILL TO FIGHT ON, TO DEMORALIZE AND CONFUSE THE POPULACE. THEIR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IS SLOWLY TO ERODE THE NATIONAL "INSTINCT TO SURVIVE" AND TO USE THE ELECTORAL PERIOD TO CONVINCE PORTUGUESE THEY CANNOT HOLD ON TO AFRICA.

4. CAETANO MADE CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT ALLOW ITS ADVERSARIES FREE REIN TO LAUNCH SUCH A DEFEATIST CAMPAIGN. THE OPPOSITION MUST PLAY BY THE RULES OF THE ELECTORAL GAME OR, HE IMPLIED, THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PLAY AT ALL.

5. THE PRIME MINISTER CONCLUDED THAT PORTUGAL NOW GOING THROUGH A "VERY DELICATE PERIOD" IN HER HISTORY, AND IT FACES TWO GREAT OPTIONS: "TO PERSEVERE IN THE FORMULATION OF HER OWN SOLUTIONS, IN ACCORDANCE WITH REALITY, TO THE PROBLEMS FACING HER AT HOME AND ABROAD, OR TO ADOPT SOLUTIONS WHICH FOREIGNERS SEEK TO FORCE ON HER, SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO CATASTROPHE IN AFRICA AND WHICH WOULD REDUCE PORTUGAL IN SIZE TO NOTHING BUT A SMALL IBERIAN PROVINCE."

6. COMMENT: SPEECH PRIMARILY A KICK-OFF SPEECH FOR BEGINNING OF 30-DAY ELECTION PERIOD. CAETANO EMPHASIZED THAT HE TOOK POSITION OF PM ONLY BECAUSE NATION NEEDED HIM, NOT BECAUSE HE WANTED THE JOB. THAT WHENEVER PORTUGUESE FEEL ITS TIME TO FREE HIM FROM HIS "TREMENDOUS BURDEN," HE WOULD GLADLY RETURN TO PRIVATE LIFE. CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT HE SEES UPCOMING ELECTION AS TEST OF HIS NATIONAL AND OVERSEAS POLICIES. WHEN ELECTION RESULTS IN, HE CAN THEN CLAIM CONTINUED NATIONAL MANDATE TO PURSUE OVERSEAS STRUGGLE.

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NOTEWORTHY THAT CAETANO MADE NO DIRECT REFERENCE IN SPEECH TO DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE OF PAIGC, WHICH ONLY MADE PUBLICLY KNOWN AFTER SPEECH IN MORNING PRESS.
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